VISIT…

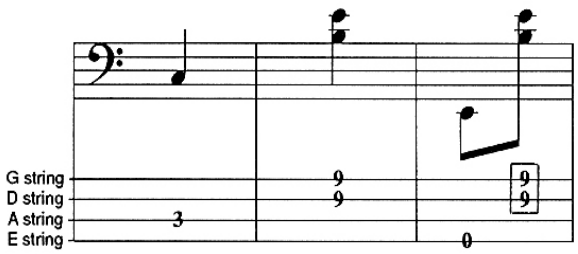
The Art of Tapping
for Electric Bass

with Dewayne Pate

Produced by David Schaub

Notation System

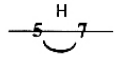
TABLATURE: The four-line staff graphically represents the four strings of the bass, with the top line indicating the highest sounding string (G string). A number on a line of tablature designates the fret at which the note is played (0 indicates an open string).



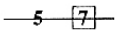
A string, 3rd fret

G string, 9th fret
D string, 9th fret,
played together

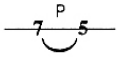
Open E string,
followed by right-
hand tapping:
G string, 9th fret
D string, 9th fret
(played together)



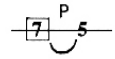
Tap the first note with a left-hand finger then hammer into the higher note with another left-hand finger.



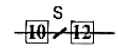
Tap the first note with a left-hand finger then tap the higher note with a right-hand finger. This is very similar to a hammer-on, but since the two notes are tapped by two different hands, the "H" symbol is not used as above.



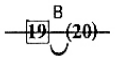
Tap the first note with the a left-hand finger, then pull that finger off to sound the lower note.



Tap the first note with a right-hand finger, then pull that finger off to sound the lower note which is being fretted with the left-hand.



Tap the first note with a right-hand finger then slide that finger up to the indicated fret.



Tap the first note with a right-hand finger then bend that note to the equivalent pitch of the note in parentheses.

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the world of two-handed tapping! You have probably noticed that more and more bass players from all styles of music are emerging as two-handed tapping virtuosos, or at least incorporating the two-handed tapping technique into their existing styles. This program systematically explores these techniques, beginning with simple definitions and eventually moving on to much more complex forms of two-handed tapping. Whether you intend to simply embellish your existing style or make tapping the primary focus of your existence, the bottom line is that it will bring your bass up front and out of the shadows.

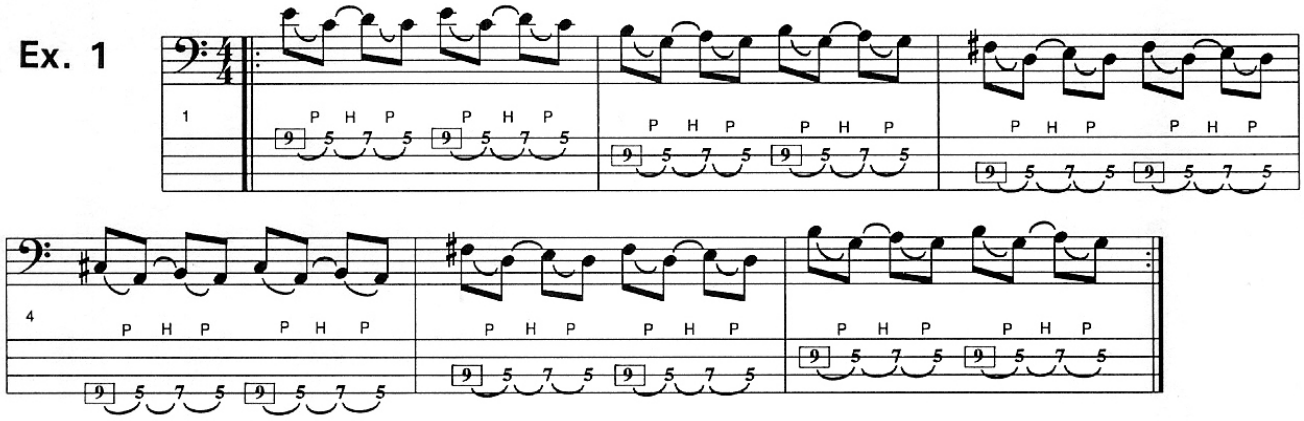
It is extremely important to remember, however, that the primary role of a bass player is to hold down the groove and serve as a foundation for the band. This is unfortunately forgotten by many students caught in a slapping and tapping frenzy. The two-handed tapping style has made the bass a much more expressive instrument, and if used appropriately can open up many new doors when working in the general context of a rhythm section. In addition to a detailed breakdown of the techniques involved, a great deal of emphasis has been placed on practical applications of these techniques in a number of musical situations and styles.

Keep your eyes and ears open and experiment with the material presented here. The possibilities for variations on the examples are almost endless. The transcriptions in this book will help clarify the underlying structure of each technique, however it should be mentioned that the feel of a groove is sometimes difficult to interpret from a written sheet of music. The transcriptions are provided only as a guide. Take time to observe the subtleties of each technique and use this tape as a tool as you develop your own unique two-handed tapping style.

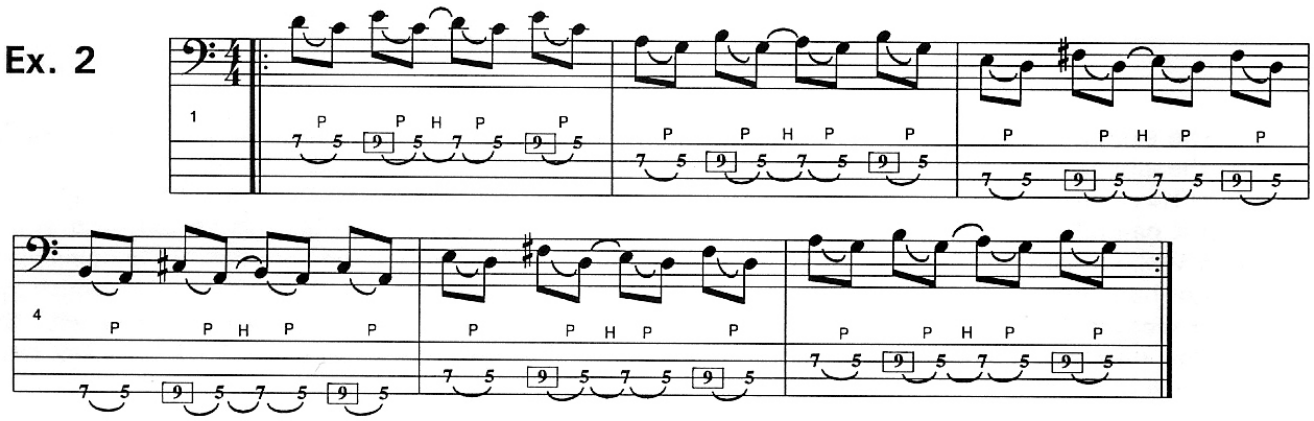
SINGLE-STRING TAPPING

Tapping on a single string is the most fundamental, yet widely used technique in the tapping style. In addition to allowing you to play a lick much faster than conventional picking might allow, it can also be used as a soloing style in itself as you will see later in this section. The first two exercises will help you adjust to the feel of tapping and pulling off. Try to make direct contact with the string, and be careful to avoid extraneous string noises.

Ex. 1

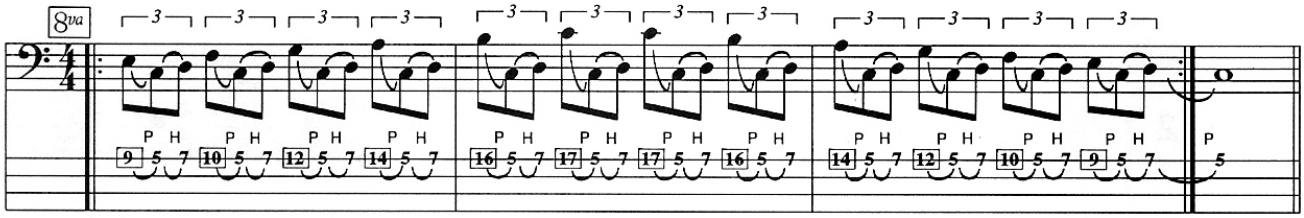


Ex. 2



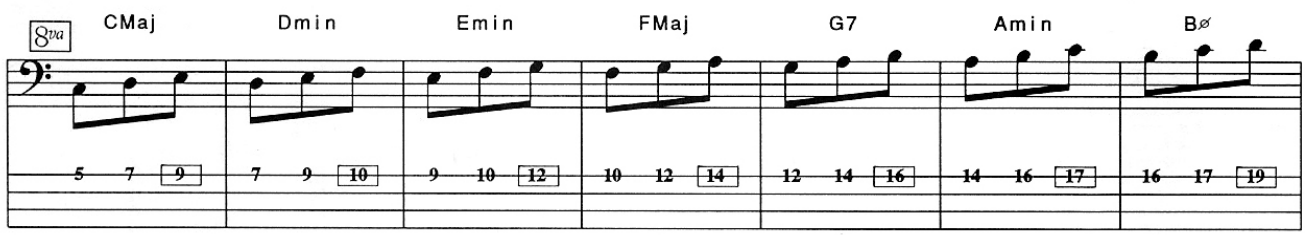
Ex. 3 The Major Scale

Playing scales on a single string is a good way to develop the feel for moving up and down the neck vertically, as opposed to laterally as in the last two examples. The one-string major scale and it's many inversions is an important tool in the two-handed tapping style, especially when coupled with modes as you will see in Example 4. Keep in mind that this example is played an octave higher than notated, as indicated by the 8va symbol.



Ex. 4 Modes

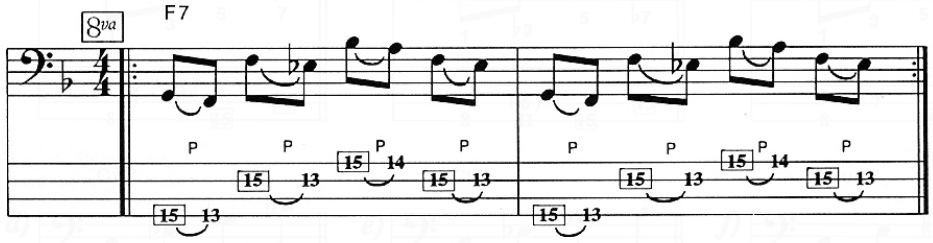
In the broadest sense of the word, a mode is a selection of tones within a scale that set up the tonality against a given chord. As you can see, there are three minor modes within a major scale. A simple way to look at this is that the notes of a C major scale beginning on D and ascending to the D octave would work fine when soloing over a D minor chord. This is obviously a very simplified approach to the theory and application of modes, but it should be enough to get you started.



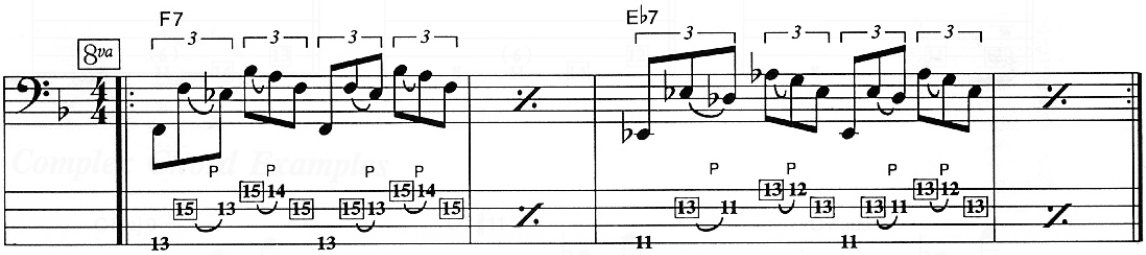
CROSS-STRING TAPPING

The exercises that follow are intended to build dexterity in your right hand as you move laterally across the strings. The idea is to become comfortable with the location of each string in relation to the others. This may feel awkward in the beginning, but working with these exercises should help you develop a natural sense of the distance between the strings. You should be able to tap each string squarely without missing (and without looking!). As you get more comfortable with this, try bringing your other right-hand fingers into the picture. This means strengthening the third and fourth fingers which are probably weaker than the others. You'll find that this will open up a lot of new doors (technically) for things you may want to try in the future. Remember, the best way to become fluid with any new technique is to start slow and work your way up to a comfortable tempo.

Ex. 1



Ex. 2



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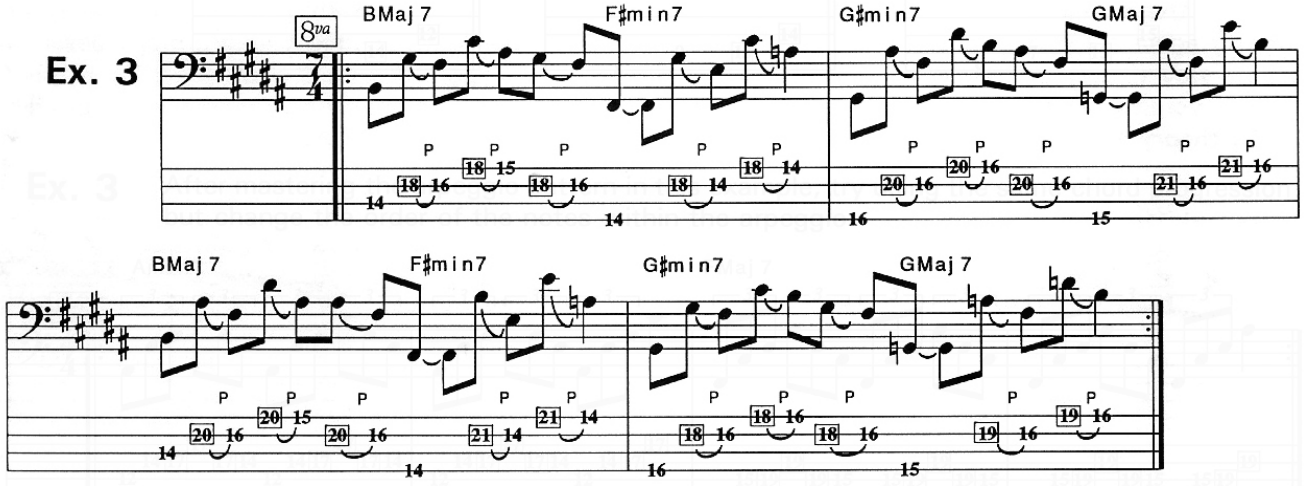
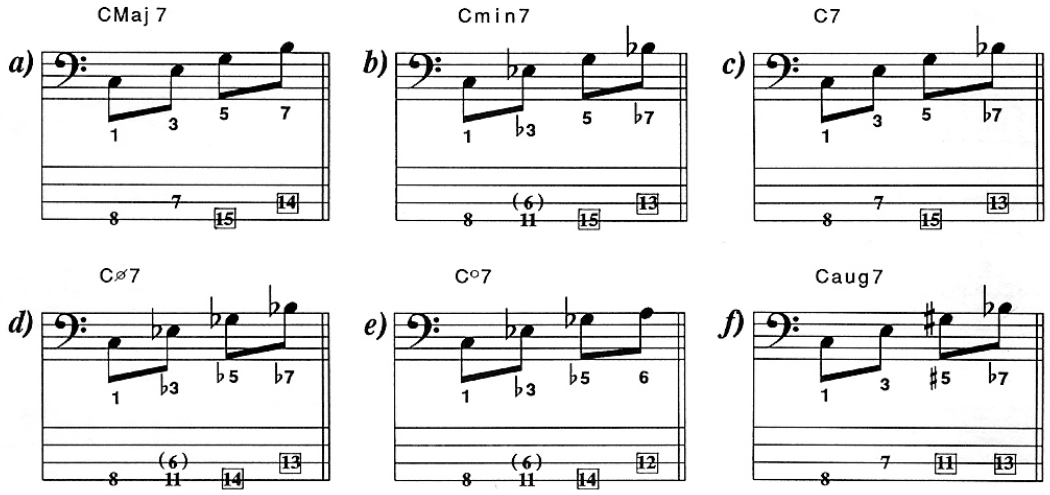


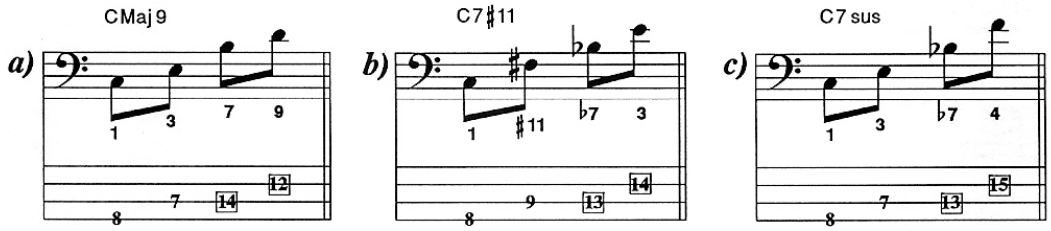
ARPEGGIOS

The purpose of this section is to expand your techinical and harmonic vocabularies by building arpeggios with the two-handed tapping technique. There are many different fingering possibilities for each of the chord types given. Notice in Example 1 that the order of the notes for each arpeggio is root, third, fifth, seventh. When you start to mix the order of notes with more complex chord types (Example 2), the harmonic possibilities are almost endless.

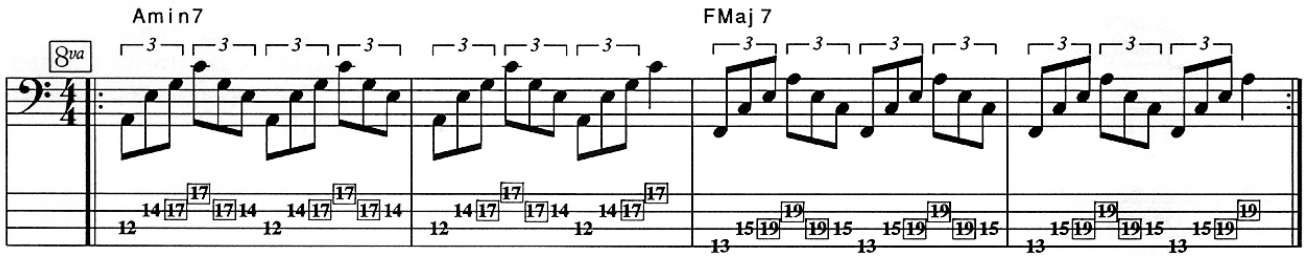
Ex. 1: *Basic Chord Types*



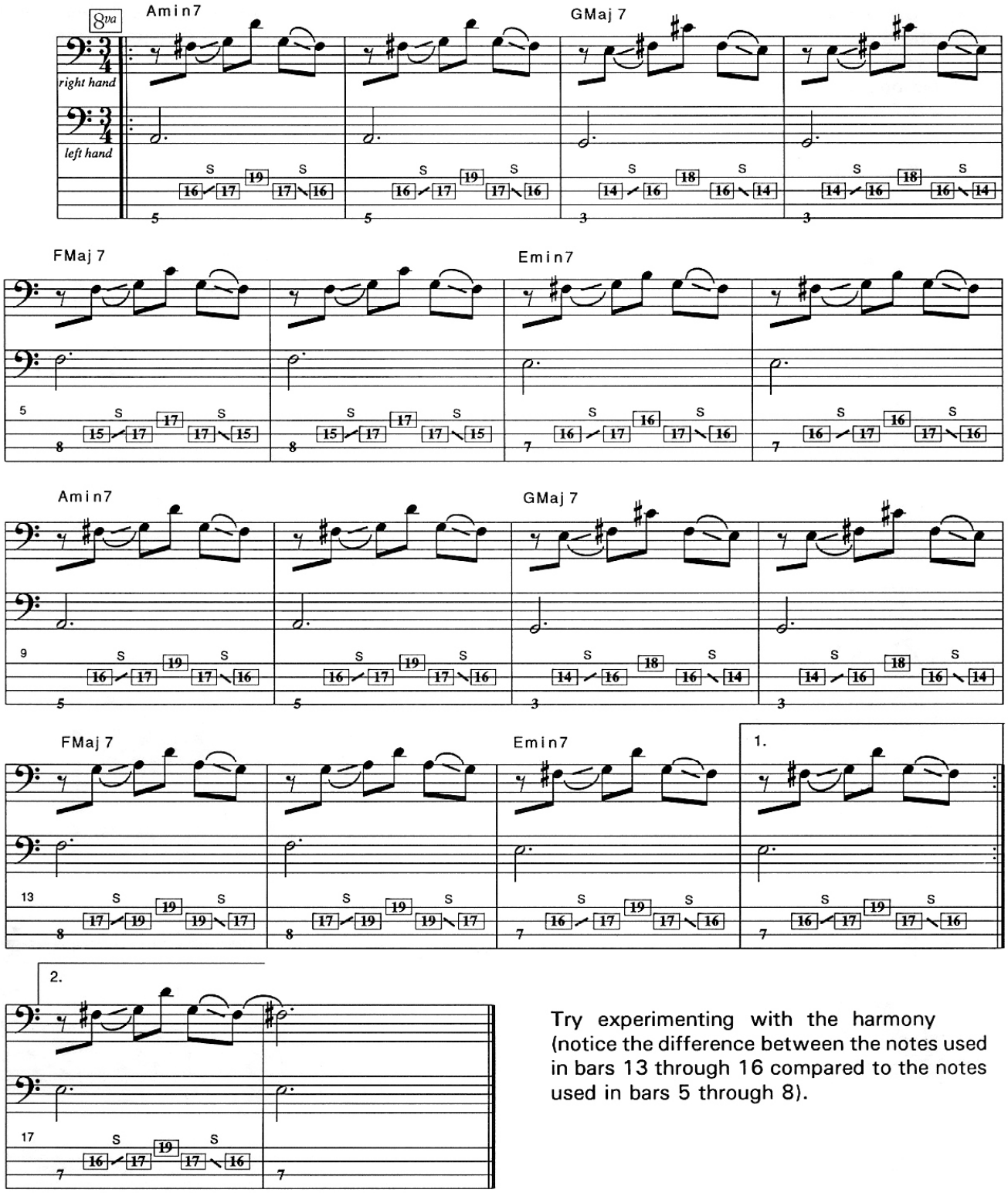
Ex. 2: *Complex Chord Examples*



Ex. 3 After mastering the arpeggio pattern in this example, try using the same chord progression but change the order of the notes within the arpeggio.



Ex. 4 This example illustrates how arpeggiated hammering can be used in a musical context. Notice how the use of arpeggiated slides add a unique slurred effect to the sound.

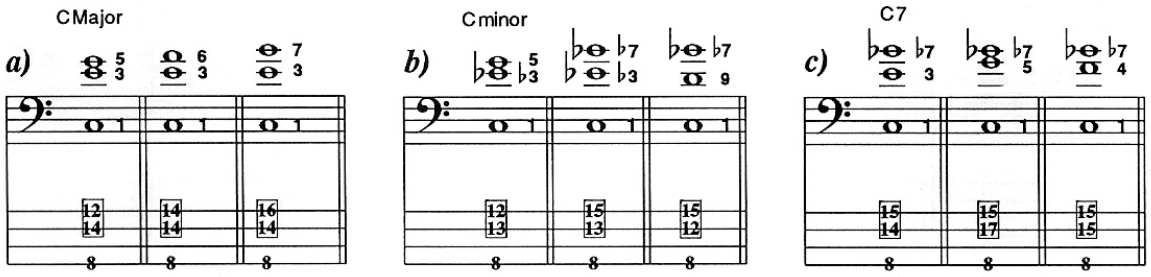


Try experimenting with the harmony (notice the difference between the notes used in bars 13 through 16 compared to the notes used in bars 5 through 8).

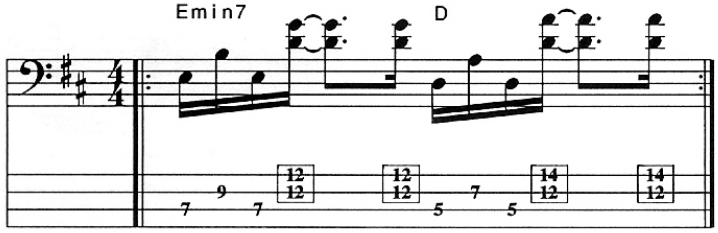
DOUBLE-STOPS

A double-stop is defined simply as two notes that are played together to create some harmony. As with arpeggios, there are several different ways to finger the double-stop examples given. See how many you can come up with. You'll find that for each chord type there are a couple of key notes (most notably the third and the fifth) that act as pivot notes or common tones to revolve around. For instance in Example 1 (C major), the E on the 14th fret is the pivot or common tone. When combined with some cross-string tapping techniques you can create some really interesting grooves. The difference in attack between hammering double-stops and plucking them also creates a unique sound.

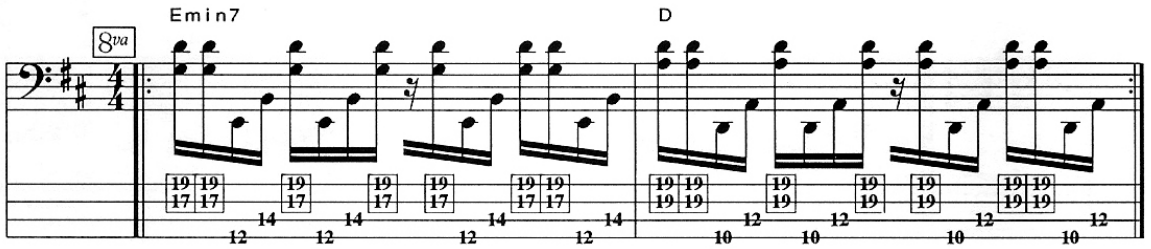
Ex. 1



Ex. 2



Ex. 3



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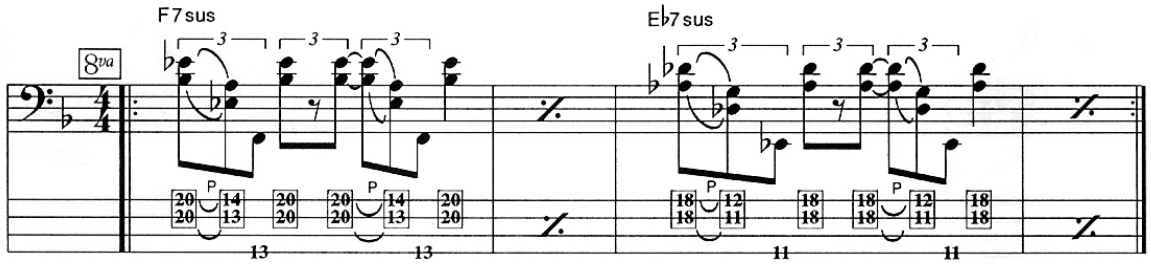
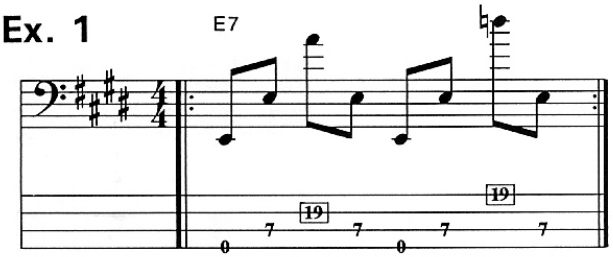


SLAPPING AND TAPPING

Since the fundamentals of slapping have already been covered on *The Slap Bass Program* (with Alexis Sklarevski), what we will do here is embellish these techniques with some double-stop tapping. It is vitally important to use a metronome at this point, especially since the slap style relies so heavily on a solid rhythmic foundation. If you are unable to sight-read these examples, then the most efficient way to learn the examples is to break them down into small sections and play them at slow tempos. Tackle only what you can play cleanly and precisely at any tempo, even if its only a few notes at a time. Once you have a grasp of what's going on, try going a step further and change things up rhythmically and harmonically.

Ex. 1



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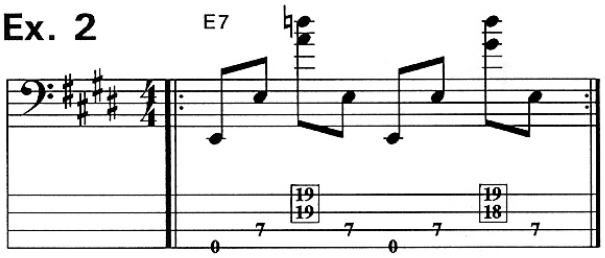

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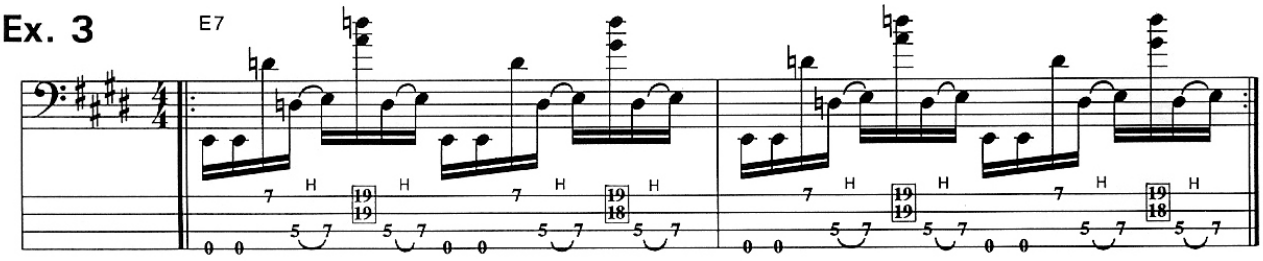

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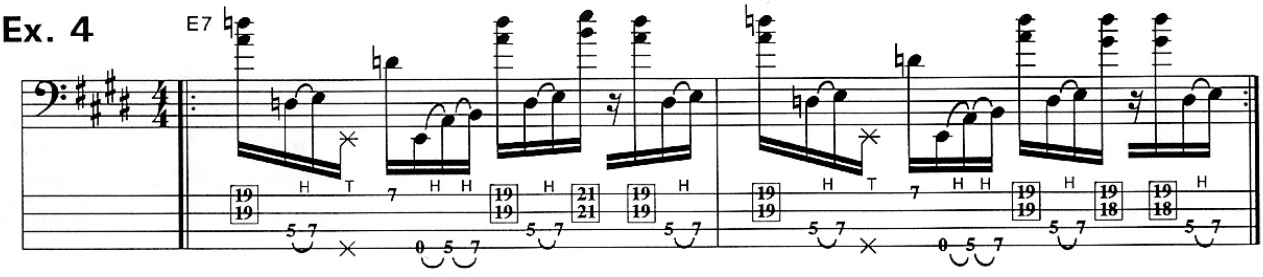

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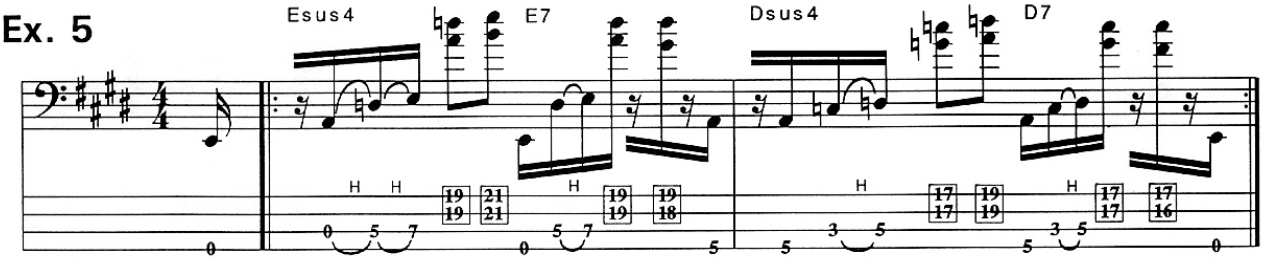

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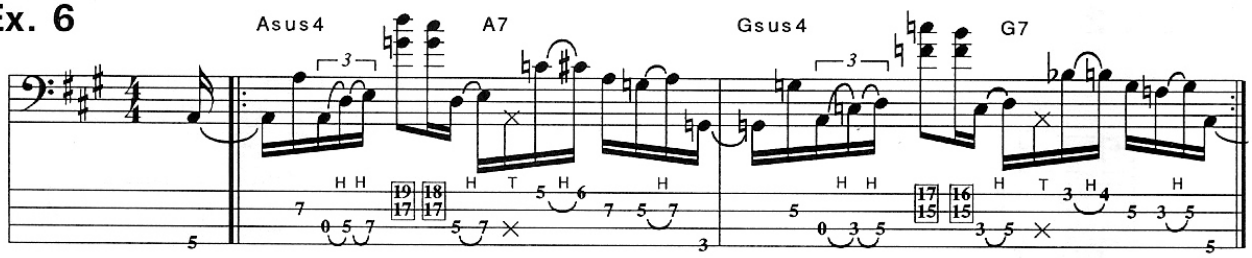

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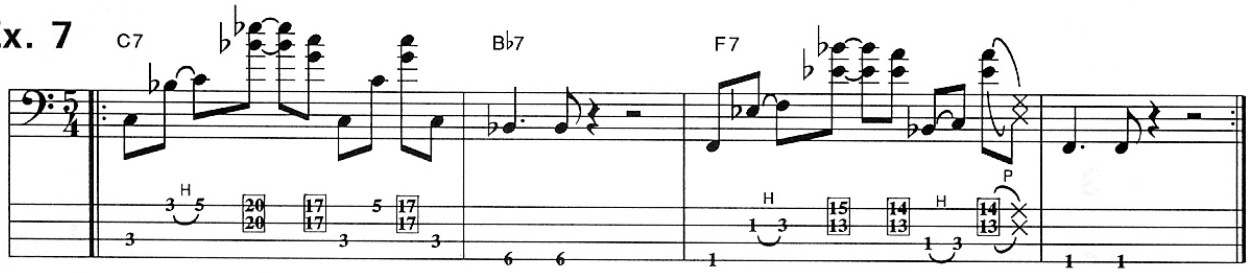
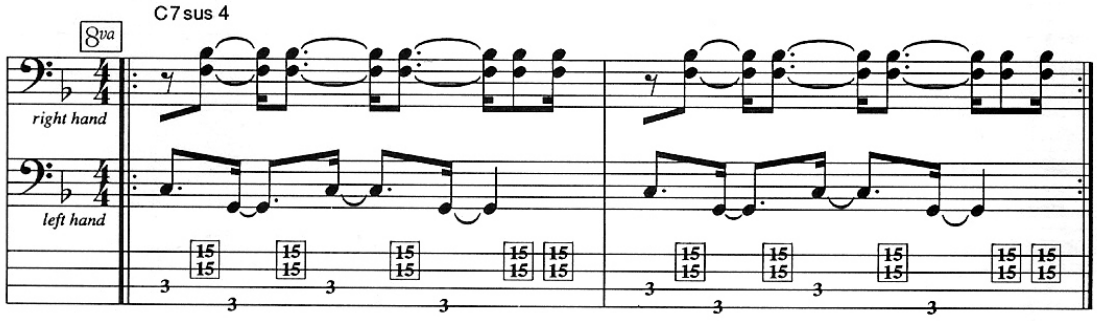


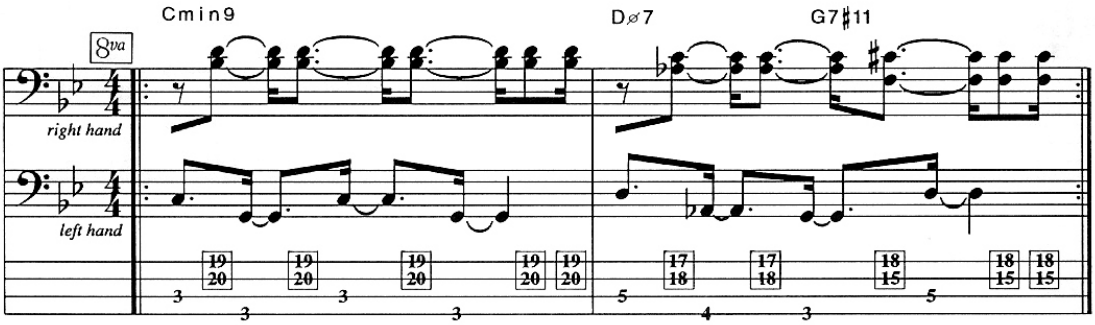
BASS LINES AND COMPING

In this next section we are going to look at how bass lines together with comping (double-stop accompaniment in this case) can be used to compliment the rhythm section and enhance the overall sound of a groove. The left hand typically plays the bass part, while the right hand plays a comping pattern that the guitar or keyboards would normally play. This is a great technique to use in smaller bands, or with larger bands if the parts are coordinated properly. Try taking your favorite idiom and duplicate the guitar or piano part with your right hand. It is easy to favor one hand over the other, so record yourself and listen to each part separately. This way you can easily tell which sections are weak and need to be cleaned up. You will also find it a challenge to make your right-hand comping part audible without sacrificing your low-end. Three things can help: (1) a footswitch that enables you to instantly add highs, (2) a tweeter in one of your cabinets, (3) a good bass and preamp.

Ex. 1 **Basic Latin Groove**

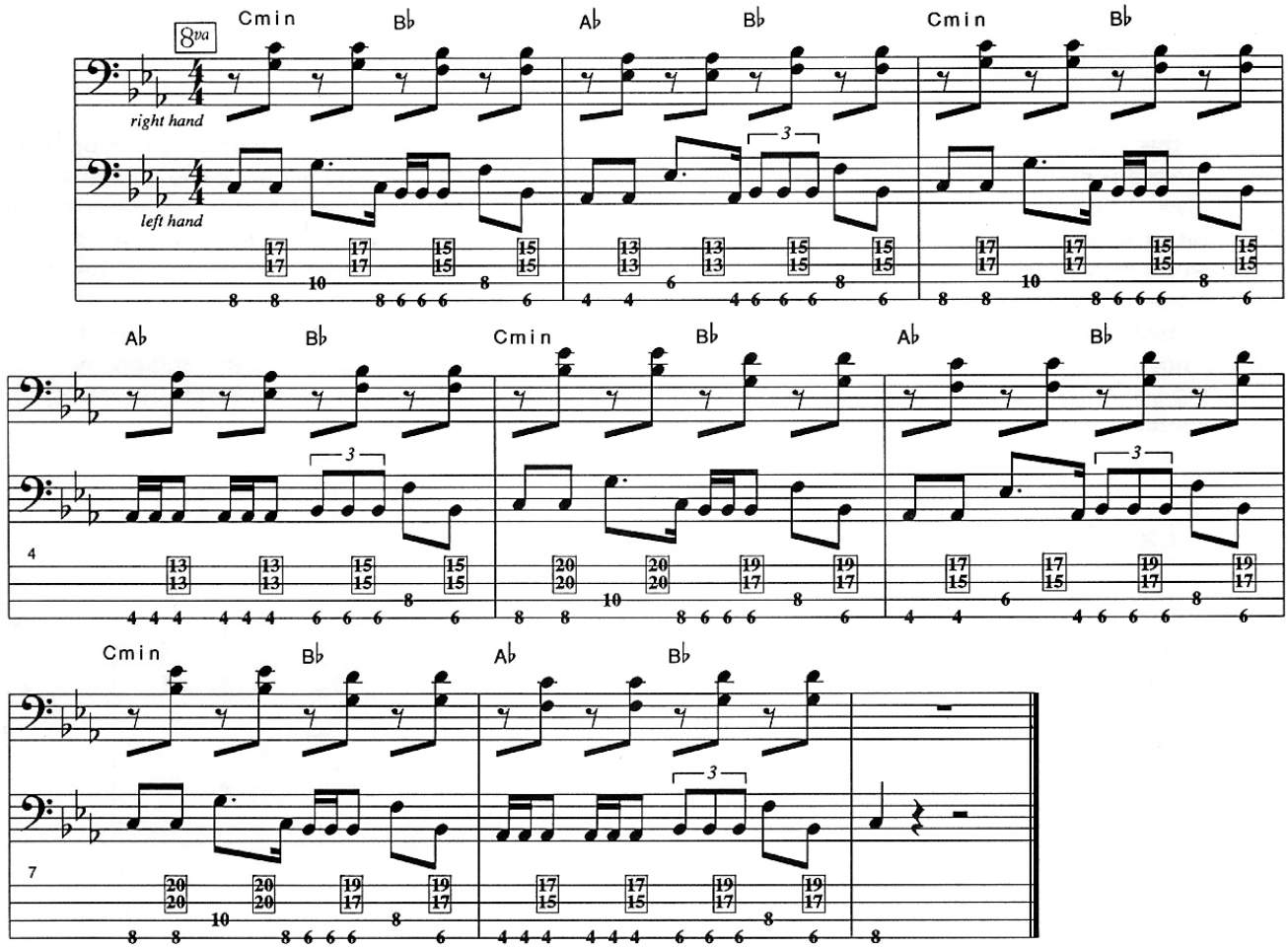


Ex. 2 Latin Groove



Ex. 3 Reggae

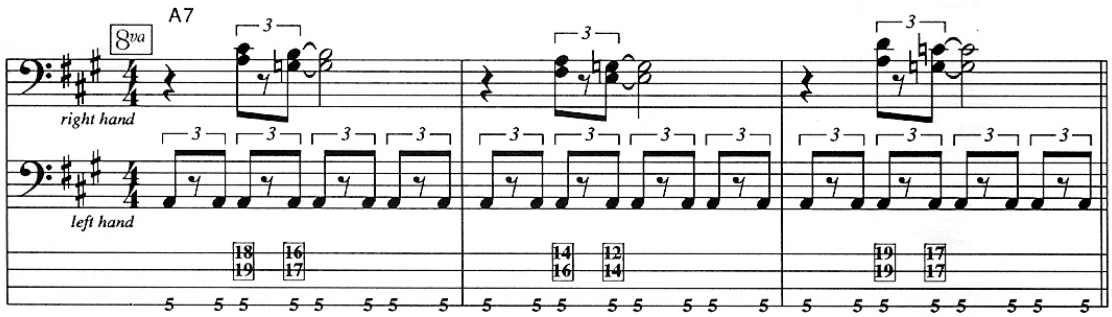
Notice in this next example that the right-hand plays the basic reggae comping pattern called the ska. The ska is generally played by the guitar or the piano or both in unison. Be sure that you don't rush the sixteenth notes in the bass line. You may also find it a little bit tricky to play the triplet figure in the bass; when combined with the ska figure it becomes a three over two feel.



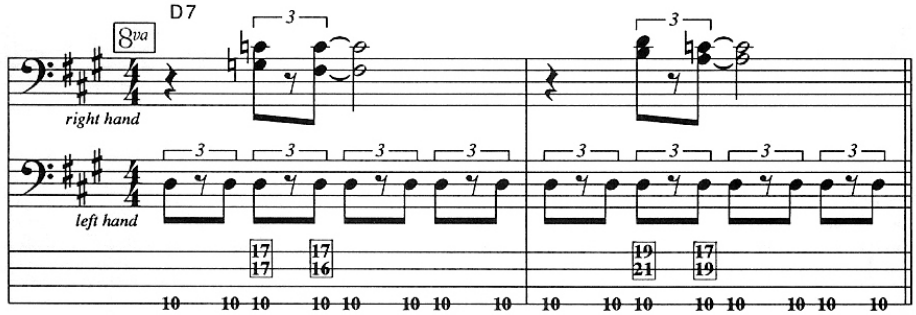
The Blues

The following three examples show some double-stop comping possibilities in the blues idiom over the standard I, IV, and V chords. Although the double-stops in these examples have a typical blues flavor to them, keep in mind that these are just a few of the harmonic possibilities that should be explored.

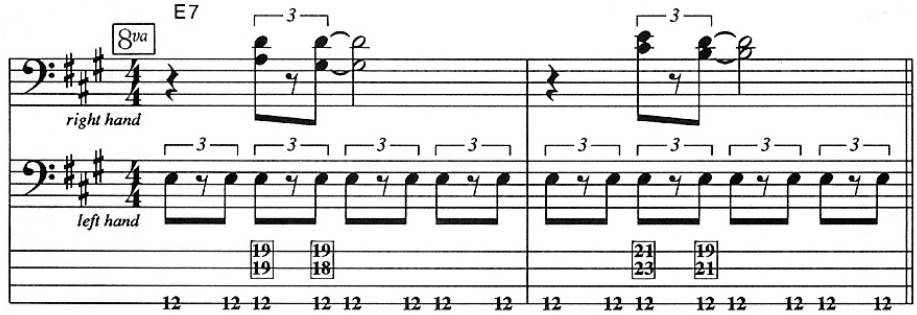
Ex. 1
(I chord)



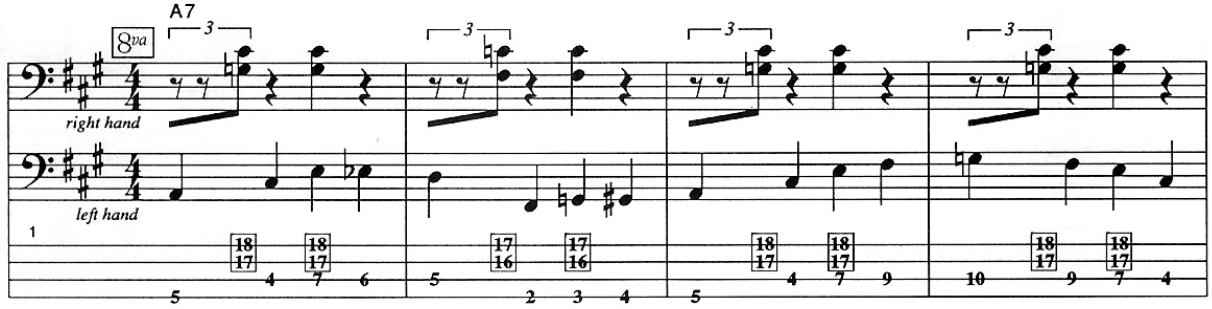
Ex. 2
(IV chord)

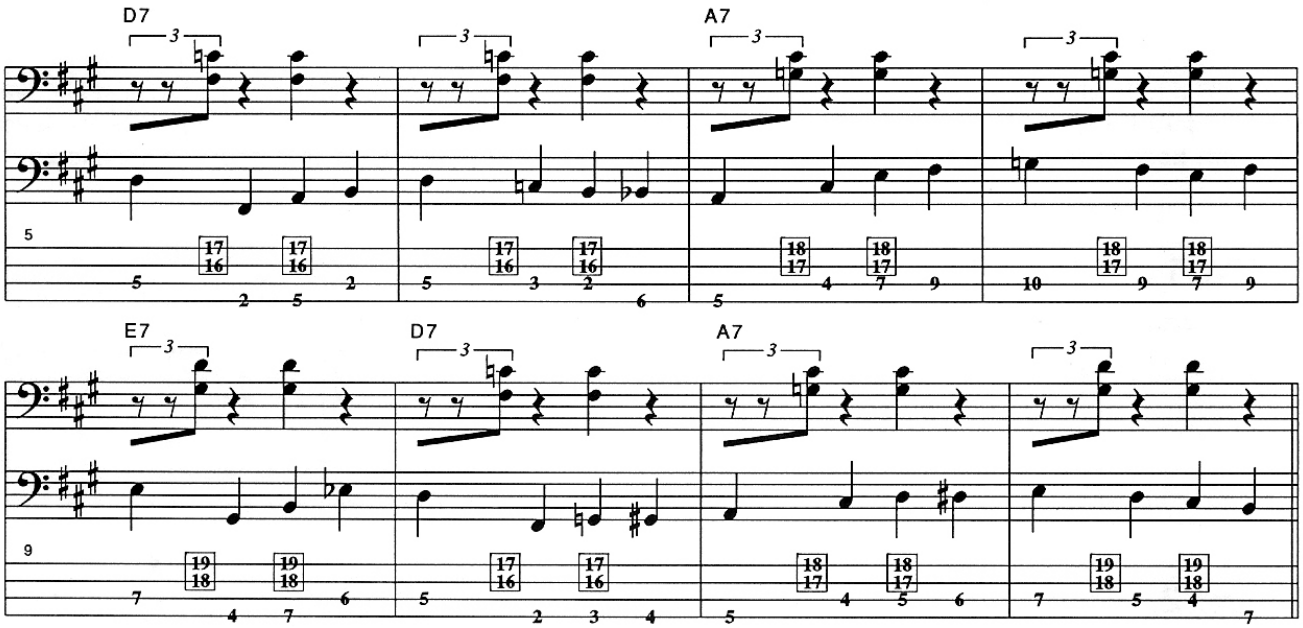


Ex. 3
(V chord)

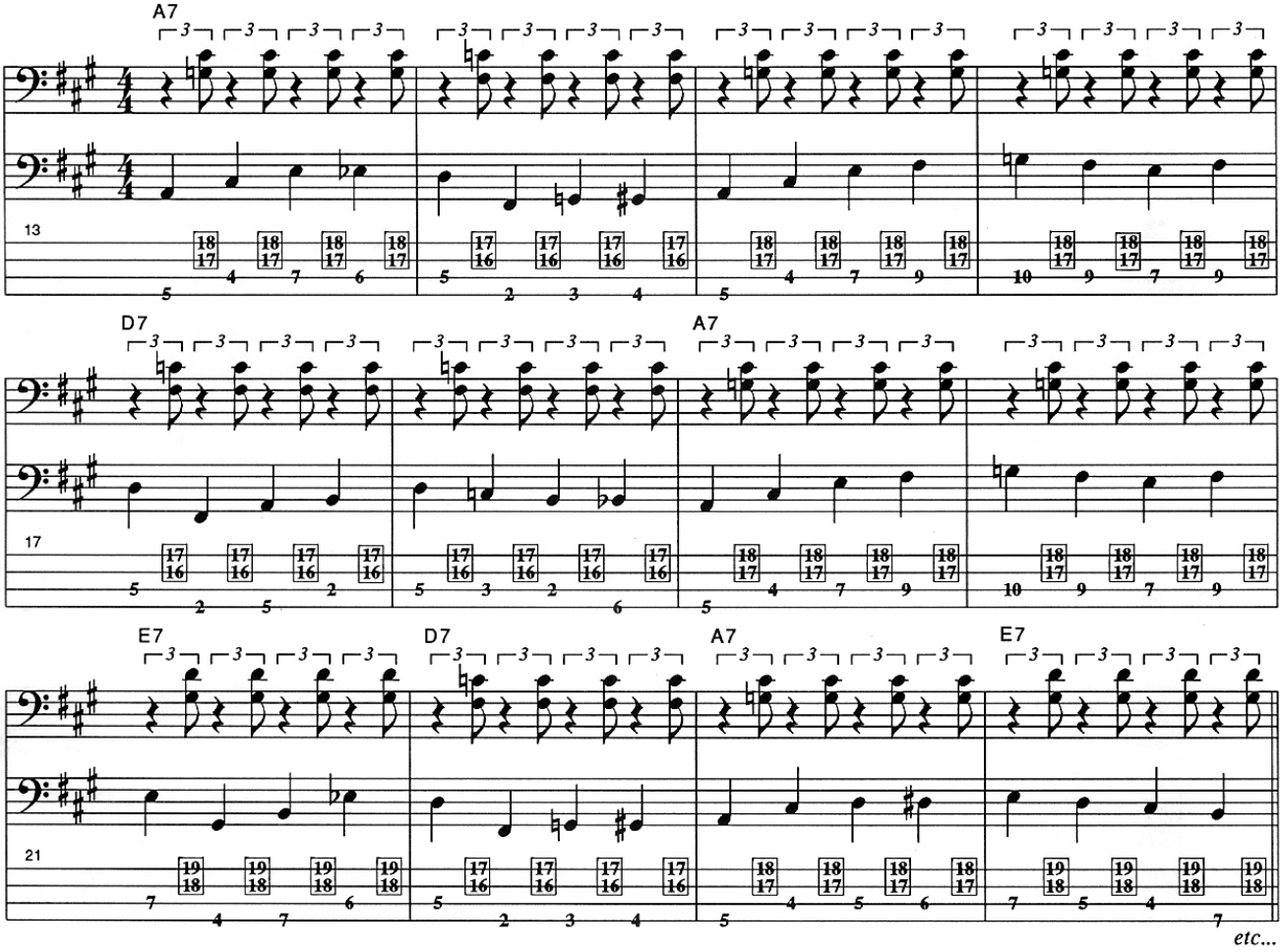


Ex. 4 **Blues Shuffle**



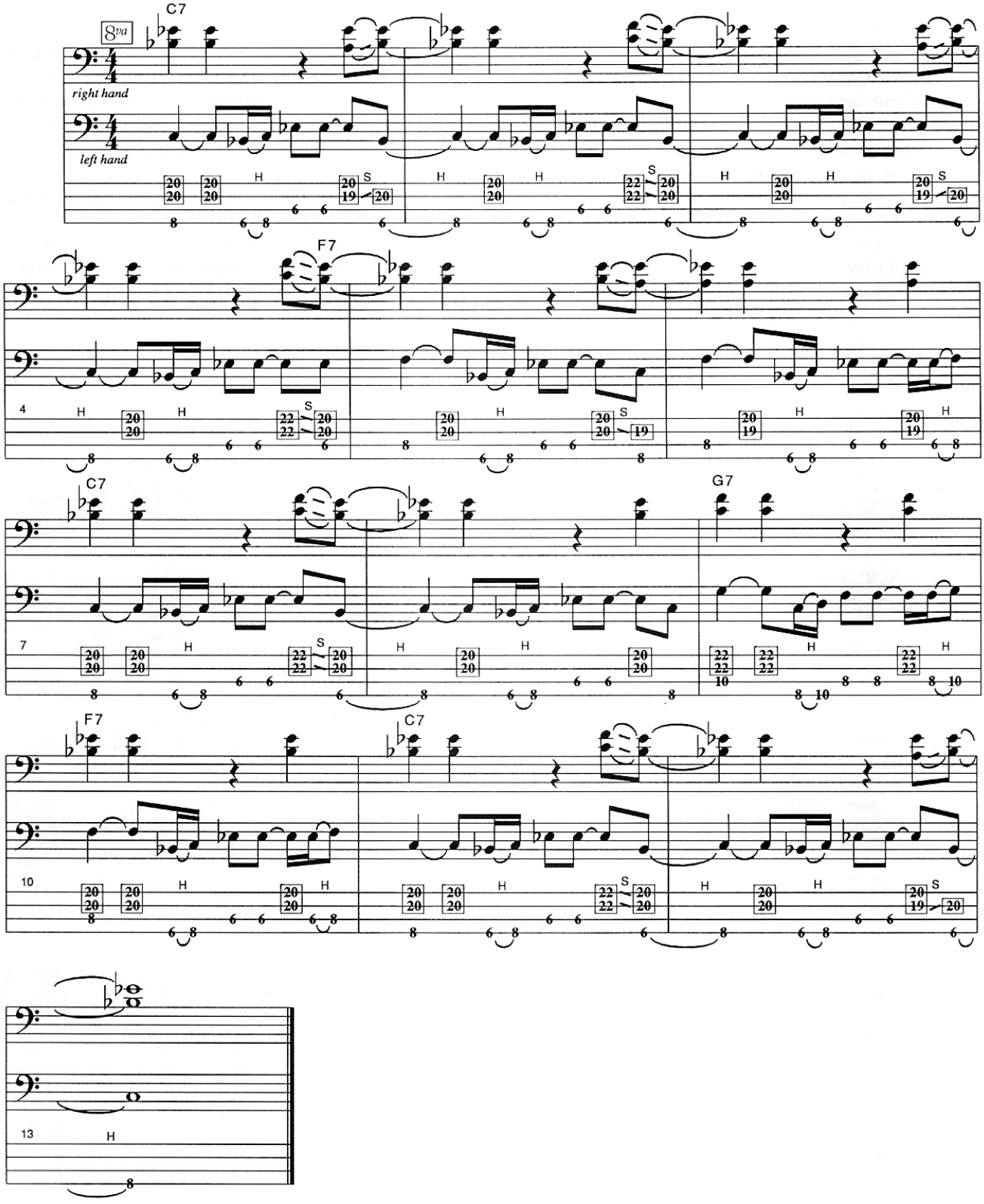


variation:



etc...

Ex. 5 Straight 8th Blues

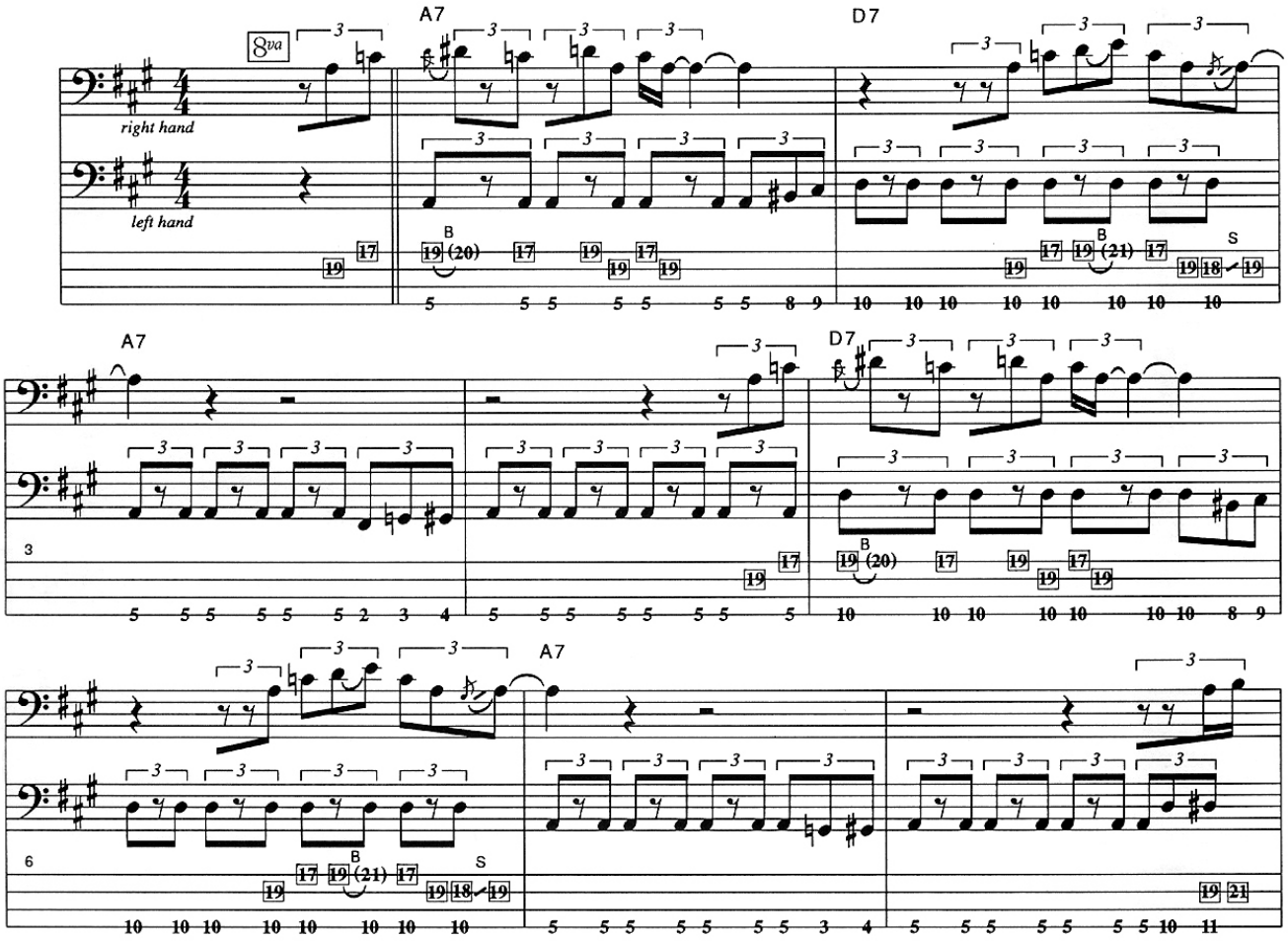


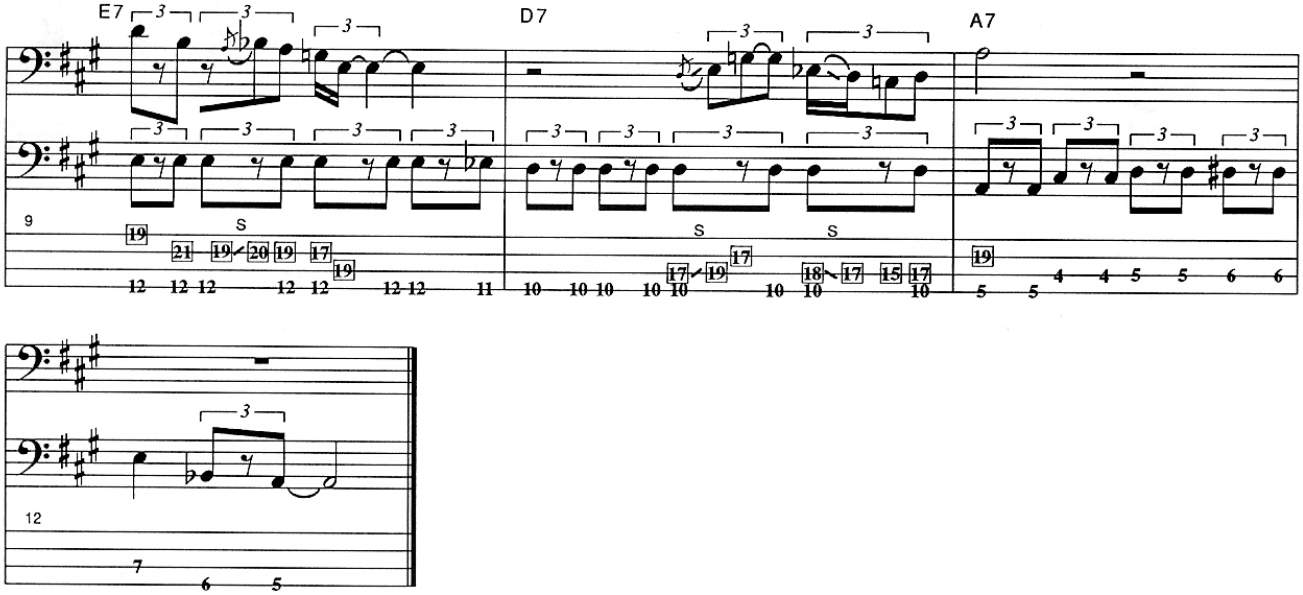
BASS LINES AND MELODY

This section focuses on gaining complete independence between the right and left-hands. Although playing bass and melody lines simultaneously can be a great showcase of technical prowess, there are many other ways to take advantage of this technique. A more subtle approach would be to play a harmony line along with the lead instrument, as well as holding down your bass part. You could also play counterpoint lines, where the two lines are interwoven and of equal importance, neither line necessarily being bass or melody.

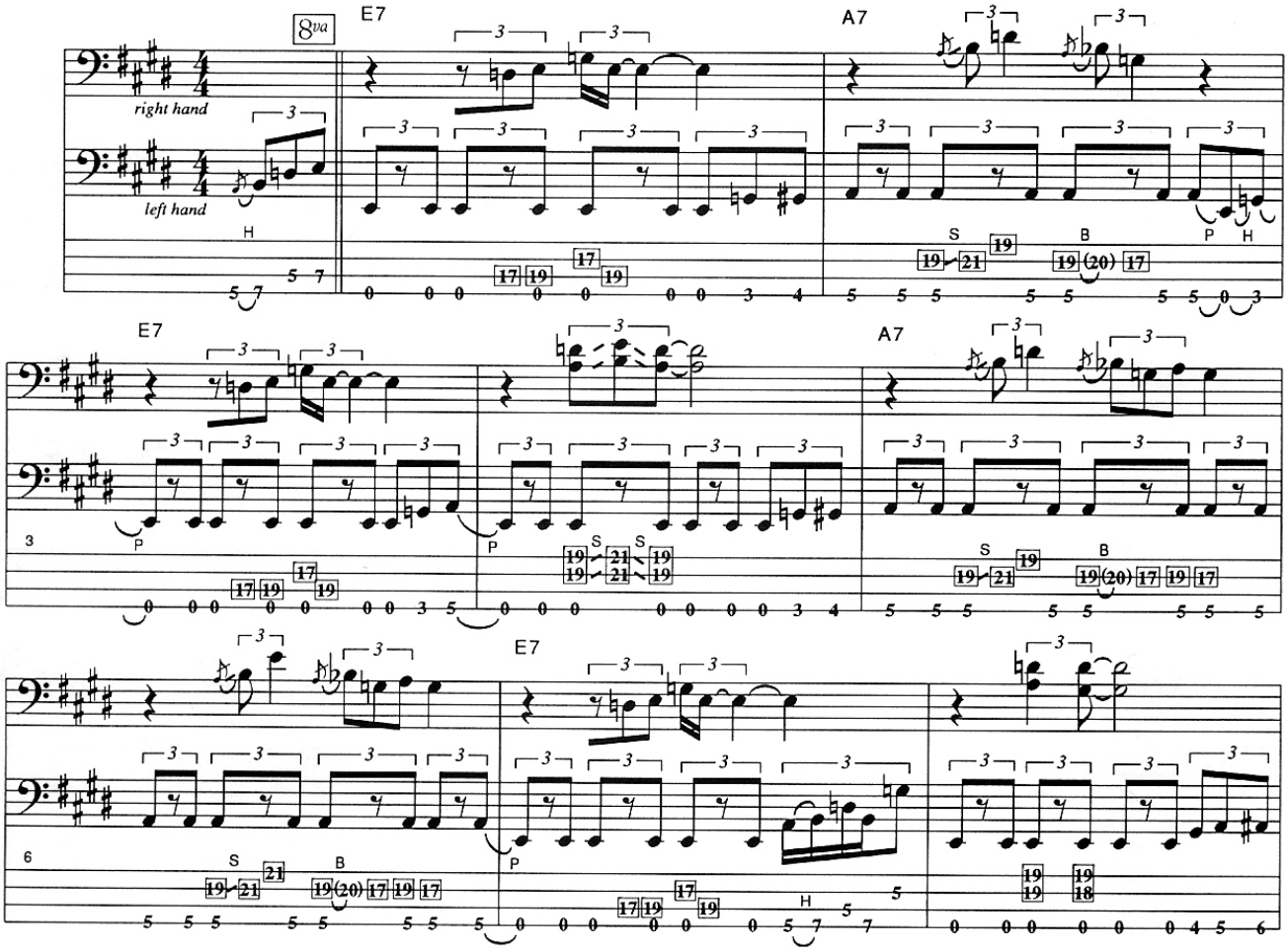
Unless you can hear three over four or five over seven patterns in your head, you will need to work these examples out note by note. Getting a grasp on this technique requires both coordination and strength. You will especially need to develop strength in your right-hand fingers because you want to be able to phrase like a lead instrument. It might help to use lighter gauge strings, but the best way to improve your lead chops is to develop strength through practice and repetition.

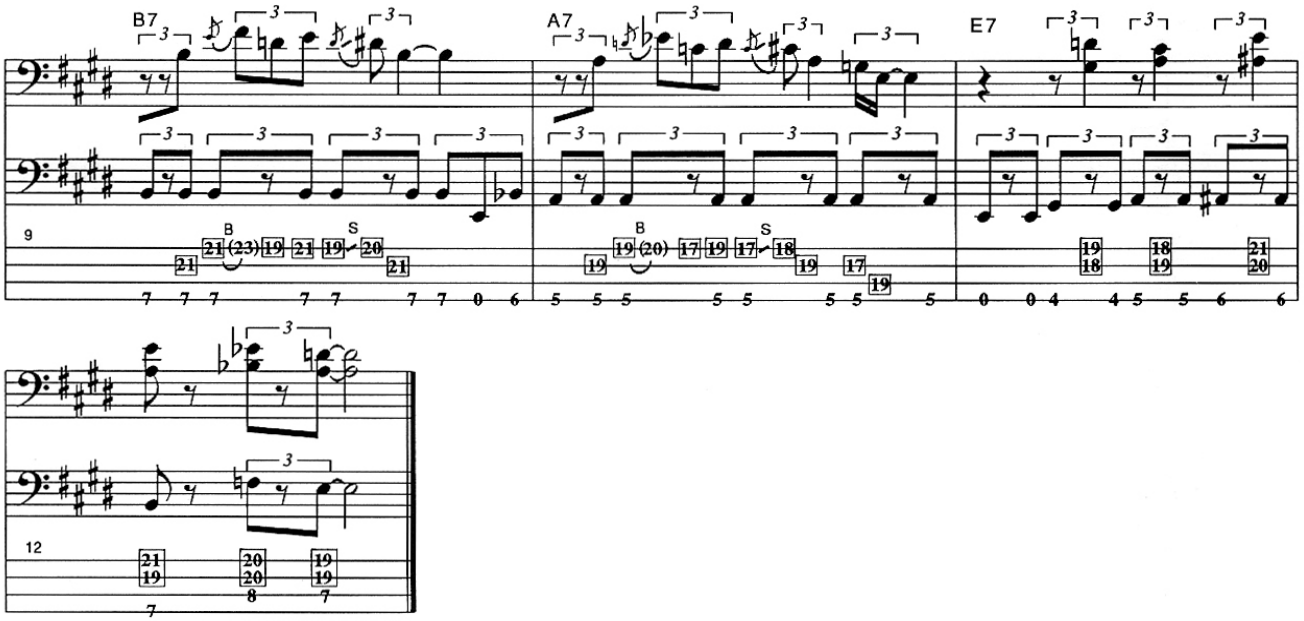
Ex. 1 Blues in A





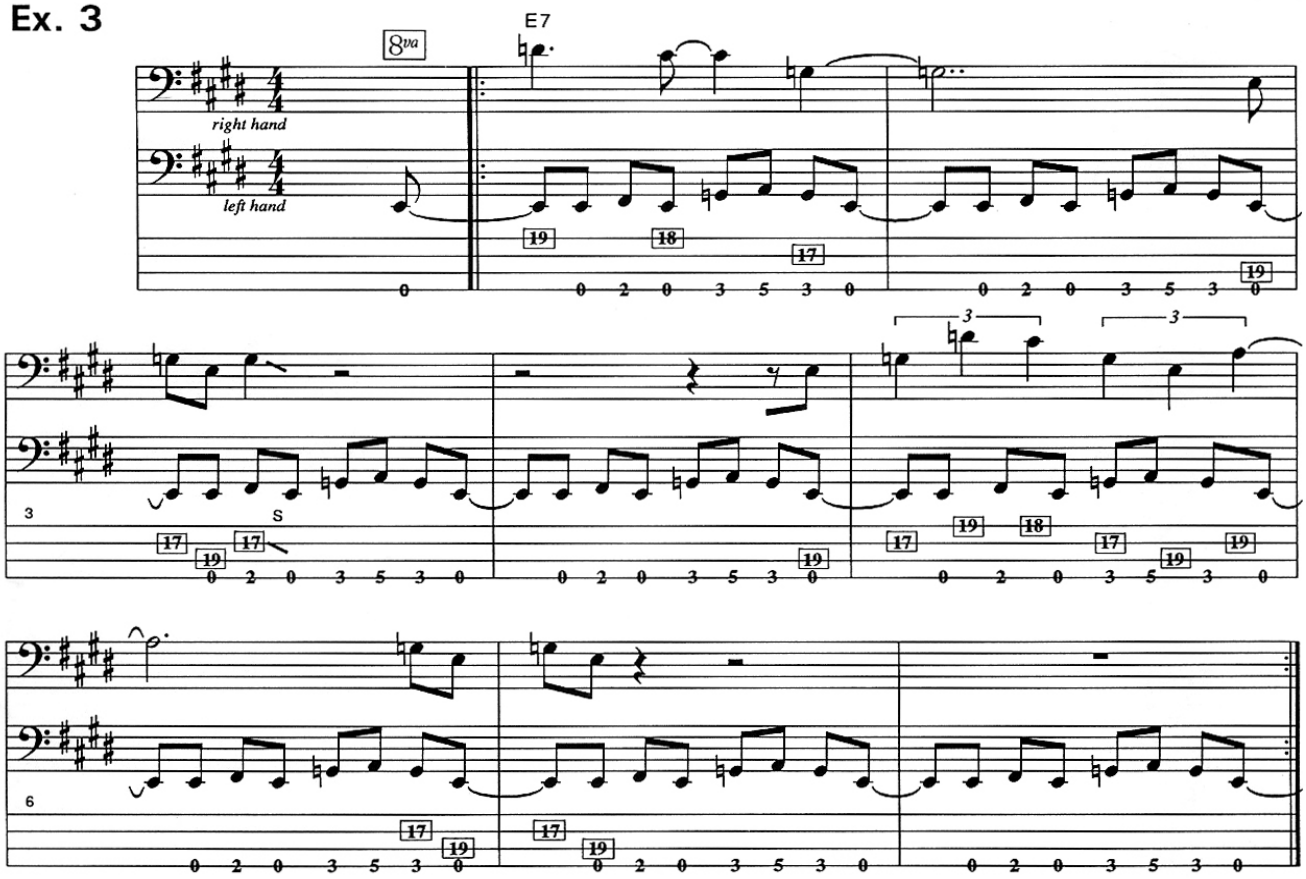
Ex. 2 Blues in E





Rock in E

Ex. 3



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